

Starting  
Point

# Your Starting Point Volunteer Handbook



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# Welcome!

Thank you so much for offering your time, skills and enthusiasm as a volunteer. You are in the right place to start helping other people locally, and we are really happy that you are joining us.

This handbook has essential information you'll need when you start volunteering.

Save this handbook somewhere safe so you can come back to it later if you need to, when you start volunteering.



# 01

# About Starting

## Point

The story starts with fish and chips. Anne and Bob Wallace moved to Taylor's fish and chip shop on Woodley Precinct in 1986 with Anne's mum and dad. Anne took over running the business and by investing in training and staff Anne doubled the turnover of Taylors. In 2008/2009 she and Bob remortgaged their house to build an extension to the shop, on a building that will never belong to them. Later we talk about expectations and passion, hopefully, you are already seeing why our community is important to us.

By listening to locals, Anne knew that people wanted a coffee shop – somewhere they could sit, meet friends and have a good quality coffee. We knew that a training centre was also needed - so our Community Learning Partnership was born in 2009. Anne's daughter Nicola, who worked as a trainer in London and recently welcomed her son Oliver, was the best person to lead the training organisation. The first Digital sessions were run in the coffee shop and chip shop, by Nicola and local volunteers.

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Since then, both organisations have gone from strength to strength; we have weathered a recession, losses, sickness and a pandemic to be the team we are today. We have won countless awards for our approach to community learning (including an OBE for Anne, recognising her commitment to training) Compassion, respect, and support are attributes we hold dear. Profits from Taylors Fish and chips and Start Point coffee shop are re-invested into our community. The way we work has been recognised and supported by local and national funders, so we can expand and develop both Stockport and UK-wide initiatives – including training and supporting Digital champion volunteers.

Volunteers are a vital part of supporting everyone in Stockport to be digitally included. Important parts of life are now online, and we know there are people in Stockport who are missing out on things online that would make life better. As a Digital champion you can be a ‘friendly face in a local space’ helping people to feel included again. Our aim is that all our learners feel they have someone like themselves to help. We can only do that with your help, and volunteers from all our Stockport communities. Thank you for sharing your time and skills and becoming part of our Starting Point community!

As we grow, we encourage everyone who is a part of our Starting Point ‘family’ of volunteers, learners and staff to remember what sparked what has been achieved. That desire for a place to rise in the darkest of times, to support people when they need it the most, and to welcome anyone who wants to be a part of it all. We hope you are looking forward to being part of our story.



# Your volunteering journey

Join our Digital champion training and meet other new volunteers



Sign up to Starting Point's Learn Worlds and our newsletter for essential top-up training and resources



Chat to Starting Point about what your skills, what you enjoy doing, and where you want to volunteer

Sign our volunteer agreement



Take part in a volunteer taster session



Decide where you would like to volunteer

If you volunteer outside of Starting Point, meet people from that organisation, other volunteers, and see their venue



Take part in other volunteer training or find useful resources on Starting Point's Learn worlds website



Start volunteering regularly

Come to volunteer socials (just for fun!)



Attend lunch and learn sessions face to face or online

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# Projects

Starting Point run lots of different projects. These change over time, so we'll give you a selection to show you what we are involved in!

**We know that people need devices, data and skills.** Here are some projects that we run, or have run in the past for these three key elements.

**Support to access a device** – this includes running Stockport's first Digital device lending library, helping people to access national device banks, researching the best, and cheapest devices available or working closely with Community computers to help people access refurbished devices.

**Support to access data** – from being part of the very first 'Operation Wifi' campaign, Starting Point was involved in Good Things Foundation National Databank from the beginning. We now connect people to free mobile data via this scheme and train volunteers to help do this in other organisations. We share up to date information on social tariffs.

**Support with Digital skills** – Starting Point have run digital skills sessions from day one! We run skills sessions across Stockport, and support volunteers and organisations to run their own skills sessions – however that works best for their learners and communities.

We create and share easy to use guides on digital topics our learners ask for. We create high quality training for volunteers, and share this nationally on our learning website.

**Community organising.** Starting Point is rooted in Community organising. When communities work together, the possibilities for positive change are endless. Community organising is the work of bringing people together to take action around shared worries, and help to overcome social injustice. In everything we do, Starting Point try to reach out and listen, connect and motivate people to build their collective power. When people are organised, communities get heard and power begins to shift creating real change for good.

**Community groups and activities.** We organise opportunities for our communities to get together. Whether that's preventing Digital exclusion, training people in Community organising, running a knitting group or music event to bring people together, or sharing people's stories with decision makers, community organising is behind everything we do.



# Stories



## Jenepher's story:

"Having help from Digital champions every week has really made a difference to me, it's been amazing, I've had help to do my CV, help to do an online visa form, I can even use Google maps on my phone now! There are things in life that I am good at, it's under control, but then – there is a computer. You need computers for everything. I wish it would go back to the way it used to be, but I know – It's not going to is it? It makes me want to learn, I'm very determined. I am so happy to have had help from Digital champions, at Starting Point and at in the library."

## Paddy's story:

"I've been a Digital champion for years, since the beginning! I just love working with the learners in the coffee shop and Starting Point's different groups around Stockport. Nothing beats going there and teaching somebody something and then watching them confidently use that. You get a kick out of teaching them and they get a kick out of learning. It works both ways. You feel so good at the end of it when someone's learnt something. And they come back. Next week's lesson might be to learn how to do online banking and they don't even want to do online banking, but they'll come for the lesson because they don't want to miss anything!"

# Essential Learn Worlds training

We ask all Digital Champions to sign up to our Learn Worlds websites to complete essential training. This will give you skills, confidence, and awareness of what you do, and don't need to do around key topics.

Sign up to Learnworlds for free here: <https://startingpoint.getlearnworlds.com/>

Go to the top navigation bar (top of the first website page after you sign in) and click on 'Digital Champions support'.

Then choose 'Mandatory Digital Champions Training'

There are lots of different courses you can do, but we ask everyone to complete:

- Introduction to Safeguarding for Digital Champions
- GDPR for Digital Champions
- Diversity basics: Foundations

Our volunteering lead is here to talk if you want to know more about any of these topics.

'Clicking on 'Digital Skills Guides' will show you a list of all our guides on various topics. Use these with learners or to upskill yourself.

## Support with Digital skills

Starting Point have an online course covering safeguarding for Digital champions. It's important you take part in the training before you start volunteering. It covers types of abuse, who might be at risk, and how to report it.

## Important information for reporting safeguarding concerns

Here is your space to write down your safeguarding lead, or the person you report concerns to. (ie a member of staff who is there 'on the day' you volunteer or the volunteer coordinator.

As a volunteer, your responsibility is to report your concerns to staff at the organisation where you volunteer.

Name:

Job title:

Phone number:

Email:

## How to report safeguarding concerns in my area:

It is very unlikely that you would need to make a safeguarding concern directly to Stockport council, However, you can find information on Stockport council's website here: <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/report-suspected-abuse-or-neglect>.



## Culture of safeguarding

As well as knowing how to report a safeguarding concern about someone who might be 'at risk' it's important to support each other to keep people safe. That could be asking a question or reminding a member of staff or another volunteer of how to keep people safe. If you have a gut feeling that something feels "wrong" - let someone else know.

It's not 'telling tales' it's keeping everyone safe. Sharing these concerns means we are all looking out for each other.

## GDPR and confidentiality

Starting Point's online course will take you through what your responsibilities are as a Digital Champion, so it's important to do this course before you start helping in a session.

## Keeping everybody safe - devices and passwords

- We wouldn't ask volunteers to make phone calls to learners from their personal phones, and even if you are tempted to 'test out' if someone's device is working by using your phone, don't do this. There may be a work device you can borrow from a member of staff if you need to.
- Ask permission before you touch someone else's device. Better - get them to do the action they want to do, they are more likely to remember!
- If you do any actions on someone else's device, make sure they can see what you do at all times, and explain each step to the learner. If someone looks nervous, stop at once.
- Do not delete anything, ask the learner to take that step.
- Explain to learners that you don't want to see their passwords. We tell learners that they can trust us, but they shouldn't! We have information for learners on how to create safe and secure passwords. Make sure you look away if they type in a password in front of you.

- Never ask a learner to switch off a device unless you've checked they know their passcode to get back in. Some learners never turn off their devices, and they'll be locked out.

## Diversity and Inclusion

Our Learn Worlds course will take you through essential information you need to know before you start volunteering with us, so thank you for taking the time to complete this course.

We love that Digital Champions come from so many different communities in Stockport, have different life experiences and that some of our volunteers have disabilities or health conditions. If you feel you have been discriminated against, please speak to our Volunteering Lead. We take this very seriously.

We expect the same from our volunteers, so if you meet someone from a different community to yourself, with different life experiences, or facing different challenges, we ask you to listen, learn and be respectful. For instance, if someone asks you to please use particular pronouns, we expect you to use the ones they prefer. If someone lets you know they need you to do something differently because of a disability, we expect you to make an effort to support them in the way they've requested.



# Resources from Starting Point

We have lots of resources and support for you when you volunteer for us.



Sign up to Starting Point's weekly newsletter for weekly updates:  
<http://eepurl.com/b8IK7b>

Every Monday we'll email you with resources linked to events and important days, volunteer opportunities and info on socials and new training for volunteers.

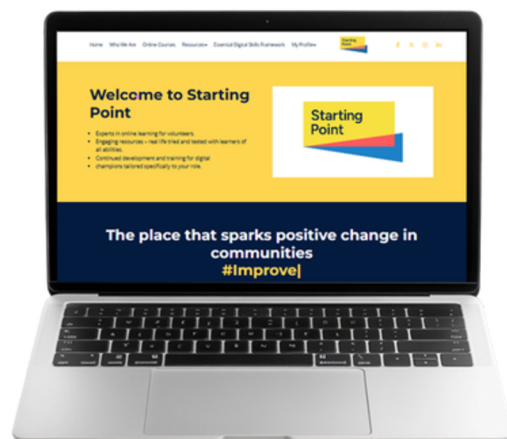
## Starting Point's learning website on Learn Worlds – for digital guides and volunteer courses

<https://startingpoint.getlearnworlds.com>

Sign up for free to access learning guides every week on a topic our learners have asked for. We have everything from guides on using NHS app or editing photos, parking apps and avoiding scams. Upskill yourself or your learners with our easy-to-use guides

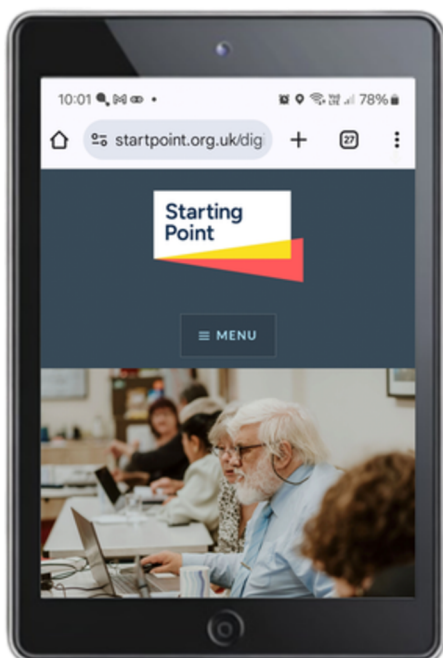
Free interactive training for volunteers, on topics requested by real Digital Champions.

With everything from GDPR for Digital Champions to looking after your wellbeing.



## Starting Point's website – for Starting Point's projects and support:

For information on help from Starting Point  
<https://startpoint.org.uk/digital-learning/>



Our website has useful information for learners. At the top, you'll see 'Digital Inclusion' as an option. Click this word to find a page with our referral form. Or choose from the drop-down menu

- **Data** – Social tariffs and the National Databank for people needing low cost data.
- **Devices**- information about low cost devices and our lending library
- **Skills** – a list of Starting Point's current sessions

# Other resources



**Learn my way – for basic online courses for learners:**

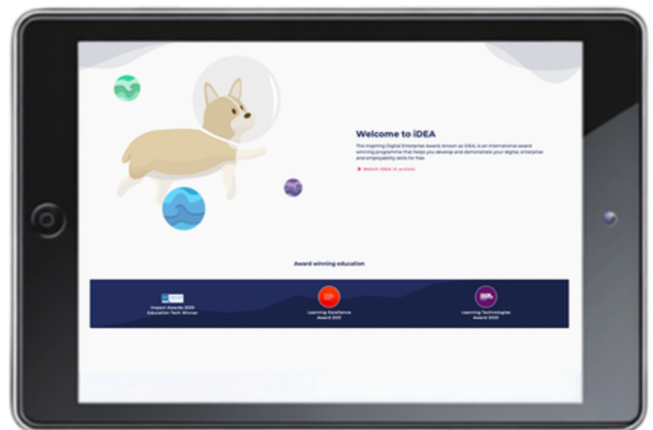
**<http://www.learnmyway.com/>**

Great for beginners, Learn my way has bite-size interactive digital skills courses. Created by national charity Good things Foundation. Everything from turning on a device, to using a keyboard or touch screen right up to applying for work or managing benefits online.

**Idea award – more advanced courses for learners:**

**<http://www.idea.org.uk>**

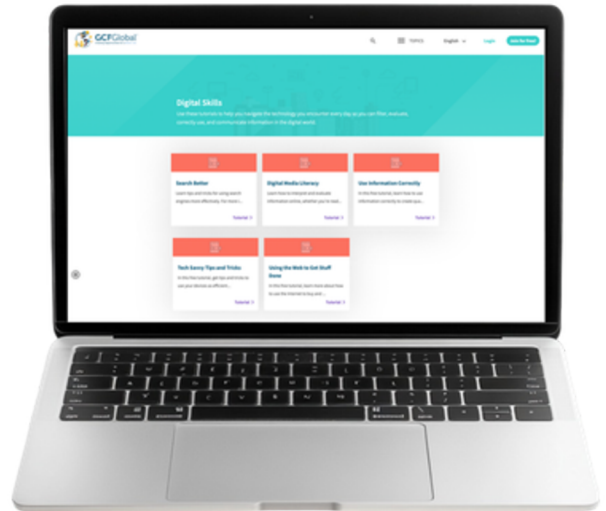
More advanced digital courses for people looking to expand their knowledge. From Microsoft office to coding courses, take a look at Idea award.



## GCF Global:

<http://www.edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/digitalskills/>

Free online guides on a wide variety of topics. Lots on here for job seekers or people wanting to build on existing skills, as well as some basic skills topics.



## Ability net:

<http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/>

Support for disabled and older learners. Everything from free accessibility software like screen readers, to enlarging type on screen or borrowing an adapted device. Ability net have a helpline and local volunteers too.



# How will I be looked after as a volunteer?

## Ongoing training and support for volunteers.

When you volunteer as a Digital champion you are part of a network of other volunteers. We have socials and 'Lunch and Learn' or 'Tea and Tech' training sessions where you will get to meet other champions, swap stories, and ideas. We ask for regular feedback on what you would find useful to learn and what guides you want for classes. Some sessions are run by Digital champions – what knowledge can you share?

## Regular socials

Just for fun! We've been on a walk, done an online quiz, gone out for a meal, and had fish and chips. What would you enjoy doing? Come and meet other digital champions in our friendly socials. Everyone welcome!

## Connection to other support

We know that sometimes even the helpers need help. Supporting our learners also means we have good links and good ideas – whatever you are struggling with. Talk to us if you need some help, and we will do our best to support you.

## **Your next steps if you finish volunteering**

We love it when you volunteer as a Digital champion, but we also love it when you move on to something new that's right for you.

We will write a reference for you for work or study, as long as you have volunteered for us for at least 3 months. We can give you tips on how to write about volunteering on your CV – just ask.

If you need to change your volunteering so it works better with caring, your health or childcare, just let us know. We believe that everyone can volunteer, please talk to us about how we can help.

Thank you – we are very excited to have your help, and looking forward to you being part of the Digital Champions team!



**startpoint**

# Contacts



## All Digital champions

Clara Jones – Volunteering Lead

[Clara@startpoint.org.uk](mailto:Clara@startpoint.org.uk)

07874 042 365

0161 494 9947

## Starting Point Digital session facilitators

James Wilson or Claire White

[James@startpoint.org.uk](mailto:James@startpoint.org.uk)

[Claire@startpoint.org.uk](mailto:Claire@startpoint.org.uk)

0161 494 9947

**Starting Point helpline mobile: 07724 217888**

Contacts for where you will be volunteering:

Depending on your role, there may be other staff to contact, ask our Volunteering Lead

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